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Student Growth Measures for Teacher and Principal Evaluations

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ABSTRACT

There were three Ohio research efforts about Student Growth Measures (SGM) for Teacher and Principal Evaluations: (1) extended testing for previously non-tested subjects and grades, (2) relationship between the teacher and principal evaluation systems’ implementation plans, and (3) an empirical study of Local Education Agencies’ (LEA) year-end evaluation data from 2013. In 2011-2012 Ohio offered a 2 year mini-grant to LEAs agreeing to administer extended testing for Value-Added measures (VAM) in grades and content areas not represented in the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA). The mini-grant allowed the state to create testing pools sufficient to produce teacher level VAM. American College Testing (ACT) End of Course (EOC), Terra Nova, MAPS, and/or STAR assessments were administered. The two year study of a sample of 23 funded LEAs has provided findings for the local and national discussions about student growth measures and teacher/principal evaluations. At the same time Ohio completed a case study for a sample of 22 LEAs about the relationship between OTES/OPES implementation. And finally, 21 LEA’s’ final 2013 teacher and principal evaluation data were analyzed for general trends.

BACKGROUND

The Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) comprises principal performance based on the Ohio principal standards and SGMS. The Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) model also comprises two components: teacher performance rubric based on a state developed rubric and SGMS. Not every grade/subject in Ohio receives value-added measures (VAM), Ohio’s preferred measure of student growth. To this end, LEAs are allowed to use state approved vendor measures and teacher developed Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) as portions of SGM’s in OTES and OPES if VAMs are not available or do not represent a teacher's full teaching load. The Ohio approved vendors agreed to provide (EVAAS) VAM scores in Fall 2013 and 2014 for mini-grant participants.

METHODS

The 23 LEA’s yielded 50 transcripts of interviews and focus groups. Audio files were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Nvivo is the software package of choice for the qualitative analysis. Themes and codes from the transcribed interviews were used to respond to each of the four research areas. The conceptual framework for the analysis was sociocultural theory which recognizes that teachers’ feedback regarding extended testing and the new evaluation system simultaneously include the personal, interpersonal, and institutional (OIS/LEA) layers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What were the challenges and successes for teacher buy-in and implementation of extended testing?
2. What are the issues regarding linking students to the teacher of record for VAM?
3. How are VAM data used in OTES/OPES?

OTES MODEL

OPES MODEL

1. Implementation

Training: Teachers want more training
Technological
• Not enough computers in the district
• Young students were unfamiliar with technology, effecting validity of results
Test Alignment
• Terra Nova is not align to common core or current Ohio standards
• ACT End of Course does not align to common core or current Ohio standards

Do I prepare kids for the OAA or do I save my own skin by...not teaching to the test [OAA], but teaching the topics for that Terra Nova?

Student Motivation
• Extended tests are not high stakes for students; low motivation to do well
• ACT End of Course results not received in time to use in student grades

Lost Instructional Time: Teachers noted extended testing reduced instructional time.

2. Roster Verification

Positives
• Directions were clear
• Intervention specialists took more ownership of student learning

Concerns
• Teachers want full credit for the smarter students and less credit for lower level students
• Sometimes teachers are assigned percentages of students they never actually teach (i.e. credit recovery)
• Causing distribution of special services to change

Whoever needs service gets the service, but when suddenly everything is tied to percentages that goes away

Recommendations
• Having access to logging percentages throughout the year
• Have EMMI automatically populate attendance data

Lessons Learned
• Develop standard percentages for all situations
• Group all identified students into the same homeroom
• Track students throughout the year instead of trying to remember at the end

3. Evaluation

Using Extended Testing Data
• Tracking/Ability grouping
• Teachers reflecting on their practices

Incorporating Testing Data in OTES/OPES
• Fair idea
• Not happy with the percentage change required in House Bill 555

Concerns
• Policy makers see children as numbers
• The child’s home life is out of the teachers’ control
• Adv. students show less growth so teachers do not want them in their classes
• Decisions about class makeup and interventions not made by teachers.

We have no say when our interventions are; our school sites make those decisions. We have no say about our class makeup; our principal makes those decisions. We have no say in what our special ed support looks like; our special ed department makes those decisions. Teachers are basically voiceless in this but we’re the ones being told if you don’t pull it together, see ya, you are out the door ...

SLOs
• Inconsistent state trainings for SLOs
• Difficult to write SLOs when curriculum not aligned to common core

Misunderstandings
• Accuracy not possible for science where the content differs across subjects
• Behavior Changes: More stress but also more data driven conversations.
• New system creates competition among teachers

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers were concerned about the extended testing being aligned to their curriculum, the lack of student motivation to perform well on the extended tests, and the amount of instructional time lost during testing. Some teachers like roster verification but others are concerned that the distribution of instructional assignment is unfair. Teachers recommend keeping the track of the amount of time students are in the class throughout the year.

Teachers use the extended testing for tracking and grouping students for intervention. Although they like the idea of accountability in their evaluation, they do not think OTES is fair.

The qualitative data will be incorporated with quantitative data for further analysis at the completion of the two year study.